



EPA REGION 7 EJ SMALL GRANTS WORKSHOP

Jan 8, 2002



BACKGROUND

This is the fourth year the EJ program has sponsored the Small Grants Workshop. The workshop was started in response to a recommendation from the OIG regarding providing technical assistance and the apparent need across the board of new grantees reflected in the number of phone calls all of a similar nature regarding grants and financial management.

PURPOSE & OUTCOMES

The Small Grants Workshop begun in 1999 in response to a recommendation from the Office of Inspector General regarding providing technical assistance to grant recipients. The volume of similar phone calls from new grantees requesting specific information regarding grants and financial management reflected the need for targeted assistance. The Small Grants Workshop was developed to provide this much-needed information and to offer a networking opportunity to the grantees.

The Expo featured three EPA Programs and five past EJ Small Grant award recipients, providing educational information to over 50 participants in the workshop. The remainder of the day was devoted to two concurrent training sessions. Training session or Track I, was aimed at informing and assisting organizations interested in grant funding opportunities by providing insight into the application process and rules. The second training session or Track II, was aimed at guiding current EJ small grant award recipients through grants management and fiscal responsibility. Both training sessions were led by EPA grants administration experts and EJ Program staff.

Dorothy Oliver (left), Community Liaison for Children's Mercy Hospital's grant to educate people on asthma and allergy triggers.



ATTENDANCE & EVALUATION

On Tuesday, Jan 8, 2002, more than 50 people from various organizational backgrounds participated in the Small Grants Workshop. The day began at 11:00 a.m. with the Small Grants Expo and continued throughout the afternoon with two concurrent training tracks that guided participants through various aspects of small grants administration.

"The exhibits (at the Expo) provided an excellent opportunity to network and learn from other (grant) projects."
-- workshop participant comment

With every state in the region represented, from large and small communities, stakeholders were able to actively engage EPA staff as well as network with other community organizations. Varied stakeholders in attendance during the day included: state and local governments; health departments; non-profit organizations; environmental grassroots organizations; academia; and tribal groups.

To achieve the attendance of the workshop, the EJ Program used several methods of communication including a mass mailing to over 600 regional EJ stakeholders, email correspondence, and word-of-mouth advertising.

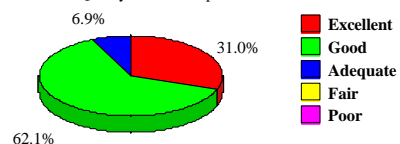
EVALUATION

In order to help better serve EPA's customers, the EJ Program asked participants to evaluate the overall quality of the workshop as well as other key points.

The evaluations submitted by the workshop participants indicated that over 90% of the participants remarked the overall quality of the workshop to be excellent and good. While this is a satisfying measure of service, there is always room for improvement.

Small Grants Workshop - Jan 8, 2002

Overall Quality of workshop



A DAY IN REVIEW

SMALL GRANTS EXPO

The Expo, a new addition to the small grants workshop, proved to be a welcome one. The EJ Program invited previously completed grant projects and EPA grant programs with grant funding opportunities which target a similar audience, to host an informational booth.

Three EPA programs were represented: Brownfields, Environmental Education, and Environmental Justice as well as five regional community organizations, with past EJ Small Grant projects: Bridging The Gap, D.R.E.A.M. Center Partners, Metropolitan Energy Center, Children's Mercy Hospital, and the Unified Government of Wyandotte County. The Expo allowed for individuals to learn more about different community organizations and EPA programs first-hand and more importantly ask questions.

Metropolitan Energy Center



EPA Environmental Education Program



Unified Gov't. of Wyandotte County



Bridging The Gap

TRACK I

For organizations interested in applying for grants

Track I for organizations interested in applying for grants was geared at informing and educating participants on the grant application process which can be lengthy and confusing. Sabre Whitt, grants administration, provided people with helpful information and insight into the do's and don'ts of submitting proposals for grant funding. Monica Espinosa and other EJ Program staff were on hand to help answer additional questions asked by the participants.

TRACK II

For new grant recipients

Track II for new grant recipients was designed to introduce grant project managers and financial personnel to grants management and fiscal responsibilities related to the grant received. Robert Bukaty of grants administration presented an informative look into rules, regulations, and processes needed for sound project management and efficient use of grant money. Althea Moses, EJ Program manager, presented information to the class of 2001 regarding project management and how to effectively reach the goals set forth by the project.

REMARKS & SUGGESTIONS *(as indicated on evaluations)*

Q: What was the most useful part of the workshop?

- *"Truthfully, the opportunity to meet others, both EJ Program and other EPA staff."*
- *"Networking"*
- *"The Expo, meeting and talking with previous grant recipients..."*
- *"Tips & Tricks (to project mgmt.)"*
- *"The piece on Environmental Justice / origination of the EJ Program"*
- *"The binder of information is a useful reference tool"*
- *"Being able to get all of the information, discuss it, and have all of your immediate questions answered was very useful!"*

Q: How could this workshop be improved?

- *"Interactive learning opportunity"*
- *"More examples of grant opportunities"*
- *"Allow more time for questions, answers, and discussion"*
- *"Provide a list of grant funded projects & synopsis"*
- *"Provide a more in-depth focus on grant writing process"*
- *"Ensure the EJ focus is integrated into each phase of the workshop as the recipients may be from varied backgrounds"*
- *"Get other EPA programs with grant funding opportunities involved"*

EPA REGION 7

EJ SMALL GRANTS WORKSHOP

Jan 8, 2002

Evaluation is the systematic assessment of the operation and/or outcomes of a program or policy performed to contribute to the improvement of the program or policy.

EVALUATION SUMMARY & INTERPRETATION

In order to help better serve EPA's customers, the EJ Program asked participants to evaluate the overall quality of the small grants workshop as well as other key points. Using a 5-point scale survey to evaluate participants, we were able to gauge the perception of the target audience. The survey contained four scaled questions, from excellent (ranking highest), good, adequate (neutral), fair, and poor (ranking lowest). There was also a 3-point scaled question that referred to the time allotment of the workshop: too much, just enough, and too little. In addition to the scaled questions, we also asked participants to make comments and suggestions to three questions based on what they thought to be the most useful aspect of the workshop; how the workshop could be improved upon; and how they learned about the workshop.

The evaluations and the evaluation summary will help the EJ Program reflect on the effectiveness of the workshop. The results, comments, and suggestions will all be taken into consideration during the planning phases of the next small grants workshop.

** **THREATS TO VALIDITY:** 1) It is important to note that the surveys were distributed and collected in each of the training tracks, therefore, survey results, comments, and suggestions, are relative to each specific track of participants; and 2) More than one individual from an organization may have been present at the workshop, therefore, individuals from the same organization may have filled out a combined survey.*

OVERALL PERCEPTION

The evaluations submitted by the workshop participants indicated that over 90%, in the concurrent training tracks, remarked the overall quality of the workshop to be excellent and good (see figure 1). While this is a satisfying measure of service, there is always room for improvement.

Based on the five survey questions asked of participants, we can see a more detailed look into the perception of the effectiveness of the workshop. The graphs help to illustrate the quality of service perceived by participants broken down by the questions surveyed.

TRACK I - for organizations interested in applying for grants

Evaluation results (see figure 2) depict that the quality of information was excellent, 60%, and that room for improvement lies equally among the knowledge/preparedness/organization of presenters, quality of handouts/visual aids, and usefulness of information, 6.7%. The evaluations also concluded that the time allotment for the workshop was just enough.

TRACK II - for new grant recipients

The quality of visual aids/handouts and usefulness of information ranked highest in excellence, 71.4% and 50% respectively among the evaluation results (see figure 3). The survey results indicate that the greatest need for improvement lies in the knowledge/preparedness/organization of presenters with a fair ranking of 7.1% among evaluation results. The evaluations also concluded that the time allotment for the workshop was just enough.

Small Grants Workshop - Jan 8, 2002

Overall Quality of workshop

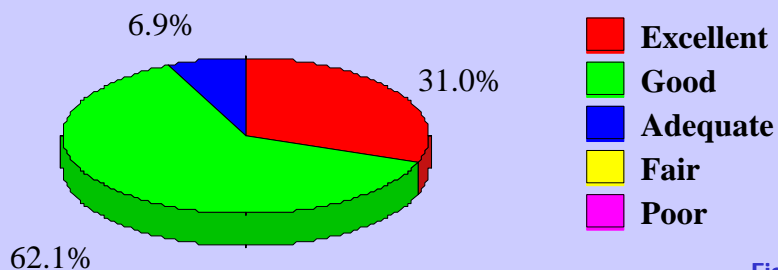


Figure 1



EPA Brownfields Program

Small Grants Workshop Evaluation - Track I

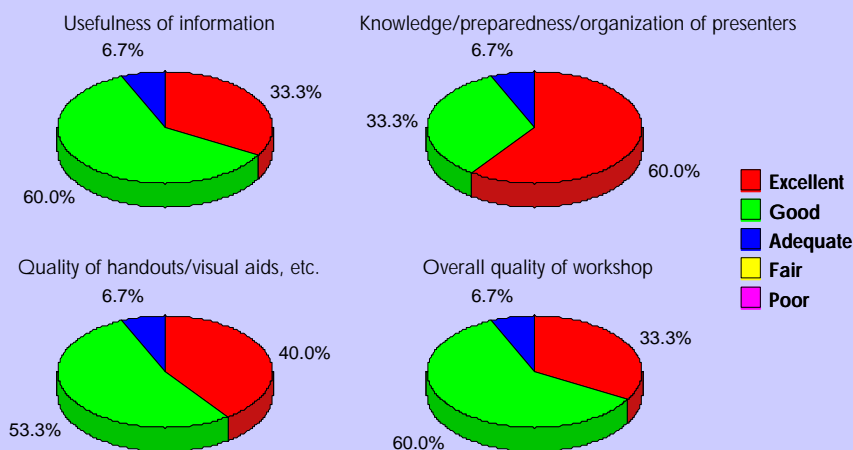


Figure 2



Metropolitan Energy Center

Small Grants Workshop: Track II

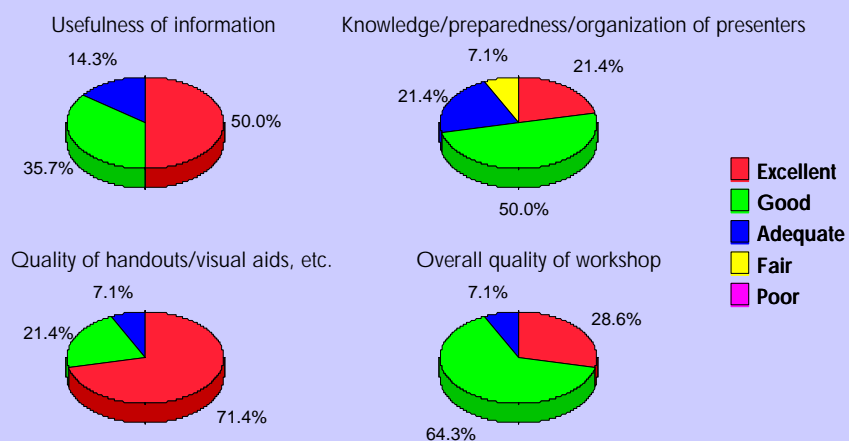


Figure 3



TRACK I participants



TRACK II participants